

other outdoor recreational activities are strong traditions for many families in Minnesota and across America. Thanks to the foresight and hard work from the members of Pheasants Forever, these traditions can be passed down for generations to come.

Madam Speaker, please join me in honoring Pheasants Forever on its first 25 years of grassroots advocacy.

CONGRATULATING LIBERTY
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 16, 2008

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Liberty Christian School in Argyle, Texas for winning the TAPP Division II State Championship in football.

This season's title was the program's third state title in six tries, and capped a season in which the Warriors went 12–2 and were the No. 1 ranked team in the Dallas Morning News' Large Private School poll the entire season. Liberty Christian's season was certainly a magical one. After beginning the season 1–2, the Warriors won 11 games in a row. They held opponents to two touchdowns or less in nine of those games while scoring 40 or more points in eight games during that stretch.

The Athletic Director of Liberty Christian, Coach Darren Chrane, attributed the success of this season's team after their rough start to the resolve of their senior class. "They decided that they weren't going to be denied a win and went out there and dominated against a good football team." Coach Chrane stated.

This year's team was eighth out of all private schools in offense with an average of 384 yards per game. Defensively, the Warriors were 11th overall with 246 yards against per game.

These student athletes exemplify the type of leadership and work ethic we all strive to possess. I extend my sincerest congratulations to the Liberty Christian football team, Athletic Director Darren Chrane, Head Coach Mark Bowles and the entire coaching staff, and all of those involved in the successful 2007 season. I wish them the best of luck in their future endeavors. It is my honor to represent a group that exhibits such talent, hard work, and dedication.

THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
FOREIGN OPERATIONS, AND RE-
LATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008 (CONSOLIDATED
APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008)

SPEECH OF

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2007

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in support of Department of Homeland Security FY 2008 Appropriations Bill which is part of the larger omnibus spending package, Amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 2764. Specifically, I want

to note that the Democrats have done a better job at funding key homeland security programs, but as always, more needs to be done.

As the first Democratic chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security, I am happy to note that the appropriated dollars will go a long way to implementing the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission which are codified in a bill I had the distinct honor of developing and steering toward passage—the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007, P.L. 110–53. I am also glad that the fiscal year 2008 appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security are fairly consistent with my eight-point plan—the “Real Deal on Homeland Security.” This 8-point plan is what I have used to develop key legislative and oversight initiatives aimed at ensuring that ours is a Nation that can flourish free from fear. In particular, the fiscal year 2008 appropriations reflect the Real Deal in the following way:

1. IMPROVING THE FUNCTIONALITY, GOVERNANCE, AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

The Department of Homeland Security FY 2008 appropriations bill provides \$28.49 million for the Chief Procurement Officer which is \$11.5 million above the enacted fiscal year 2007 level. This increase funding can help the office attract and retain experienced staff to manage procurements. The bill also provides a \$108.7 million for the Office of Inspector General at the Department of Homeland Security, \$6 million above the enacted fiscal year 2007 level. It is also notable that the bill's Joint Explanatory Statement makes clear that Congress favors contracts awarded by full and open competition. The bill also acknowledges the operation of the Small Business Act and therefore does not adversely affect the award of contracts to small, minority and disadvantaged businesses. In addition, the bill requires the Inspector General to review contracts awarded by means other than full and open competition to determine compliance with the law. Finally, I am very pleased that the bill provides no funding for MAX–HR but rather provides \$10 million for the Department of Homeland Security to address the issues revealed in the 2006 Federal Human Capital Survey. The bill further requires the Secretary to submit an expenditure plan for the \$10 million prior to the obligation of the funds.

However, I must point out that the Committee on Homeland Security was disappointed with the decision not to fund the relocation of the headquarters for the Department of Homeland Security at the St. Elizabeths site in Washington, DC.

2. ENHANCING SECURITY FOR ALL MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

I applaud the bill which provides over \$4.5 billion to enhance aviation security. That funding makes the bill consistent with meeting aviation security mandates in P.L. 110–53. For example, the bill fully funds the Aviation Security Capitol Fund at \$250 million. Furthermore, this bill provides \$15 million for a pilot program to screen 100 percent of airport workers.

Although the bill does not provide sufficient resources to implement the authorization levels in P.L. 110–53, the Appropriations Committee has provided the foundation to reach that goal. For example, the bill provides \$400 million in Public Transportation and Railroad Security Grants. This includes not less than \$25 million for Amtrak, \$11.5 million over the

road bus security grants, and \$16 million for trucking security grants. This is in contrast to the authorized amount in P.L. 110–53 which called for \$650 million for public transit, \$300 million for rail, and \$150 million for Amtrak.

I also support the bill's provision of \$523.5 million for information technology and intelligence for transportation security and the increased funding for Red Teams at \$6.26 million—a 50 percent increase over the enacted level of fiscal year 2007. Finally, the bill provides \$46 million for surface transportation security, an increase from the \$41.4 million enacted in fiscal year 2007. Of the proposed amount for fiscal year 2008, \$24.5 million is for staffing and operations, \$22.1 million is for inspectors and canines, and another \$30 million is provided for security training program, transportation risk assessment, and the development of regulation for name-based immigration screening for public transportation and rail workers.

3. RESPONSE, RESILIENCE, AND RECOVERY IN THE WAKE OF A NATIONAL CATASTROPHE

I am pleased that key programs to assist first responders and State, local, and tribal governments have been funded above the President's request. Specifically, the State Homeland Security Grant Program which provides grants to first responders in all 50 States and U.S. Territories to help them prevent, prepare for, and respond to an act of terrorism or other emergency is funded at \$950 million. The Urban Area Security Initiative, which addresses the unique planning, operations, equipment, training, and exercise needs of high-threat, high-density urban areas, is funded at \$820 million—a \$50 million increase in funding over FY 2007 levels.

The bill also provides \$41 million for the Metropolitan Medical Response System, MMRS; \$300 million for Emergency Management Performance Grant, EMPG, program; \$560 million for FIRE grants; \$190 million for the SAFER Act program; and \$32.5 million for the Urban Search and Rescue System, USAR, a \$7.5 million increase over the enacted level in fiscal year 2007.

I also support the bill for directing FEMA to assist communities by ensuring disaster preparedness and response education materials are developed and distributed to children. The bill also supports the Office of the Disabilities Coordinator and directs the Department of Homeland Security's Inspector General to investigate FEMA's policies and processes regarding formaldehyde in trailers purchased by the agency to house disaster victims in the office created by the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006.

I will note, however, that it is unfortunate that the splintered oversight jurisdiction of the Department of Homeland Security has resulted in the inclusion of section 541 of the bill which states that “none of the funds provided by this or previous appropriations Acts shall be used to fund any position designated as a Principal Federal Official, PFO, for any Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act declared disasters or emergencies.” I am very concerned that this language micromanages Federal emergency response through the appropriation process, interferes with the writing of the National Response Framework which aims to clarify the role of the PFO and does not recognize the situations where the appointment of PFO would be necessary, public health emergencies, cyber attacks, etc. Simply stated, this